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## What is the Para Path program?

## **Description of the Program**

- The Para Path program is designed to assist those already working in the classroom as instructional paraprofessionals to get their degree and teacher certification.
- The curriculum is the same as our traditional teacher preparation coursework, but the courses are offered in the evenings, weekends and online to allow paraprofessionals to continue to work while attending school.
- Paraprofessionals are allowed to use their hours in the classroom toward the student teaching requirement, which means they do not have to quit work to complete student teaching.
- The following degree plans have coursework scheduled specifically for Para Path students:
  - PK-3 Core, PK-3 Special Education, PK-3 Bilingual, EC-6 Core, EC-6 Special Education and EC-6 Bilingual.
- At this time, the Para Path cohort is not able to accommodate students in 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> or secondary certification programs.

#### Students are ready for the Para Path program when:

- They have completed at least 42 core credit hours (either at SHSU or at another university/ community college).
- They will be pursuing a degree in education and certification in either PK-3 or EC-6 at SHSU.
- They are currently employed as an instructional paraprofessional in a Texas public school or TEA-accredited charter school, or they will be employed as a para once they start the program.
- They are in a para placement that aligns with their certification area.

## To begin the program students must:

- Apply and be accepted to SHSU.
- Apply and be accepted to the Para Path program.
- Be advised by the Para Path program advisor.
- Enroll in classes.

#### **SHSU Admission**

- Complete the online application.
  - o If you are a first-time freshman, apply through **Common App** or **ApplyTexas**.
  - For transfer, graduate, and international students, complete an application through ApplyTexas.
- Check the status of your application at <u>www.shsu.edu/checkstatus</u>.
- For more information, check out "Steps to Apply."

## **Para Path Admission Requirements and Documentation**

\*After being accepted to SHSU, students can then submit their application to the Para Path program.\*

## **Coursework Requirements:**

- Core complete (42 hours) with grades of "C" or better in each course
  - For a specific list of courses in SHSU's core curriculum, please follow this link: https://tinyurl.com/4f5rxpfx
  - Other courses not listed may meet core requirements; specific information regarding acceptable course transfers will be provided at a student's advising appointment.
- Cumulative GPA 2.75 (all transcripts)

## **Document Requirements:**

- Completed Para Path application
- Proof of current employment as an instructional paraprofessional/aide in a Texas public school
- Letter of recommendation from your principal (form provided by the Para Path program)
- Completed Handbook Acknowledgement (form provided by the Para Path program)
- Please contact the Para Path program at ParaPath@shsu.edu to request the link to the application.

#### **Classroom Placement and Certification Area Alignment:**

- Per TEA policy, all Para Path students must be working in a classroom that aligns with their certification area.
  - $\circ$  PK-3 Core Certification  $\rightarrow$  Must be employed in a PK-3 classroom (any subject).
  - PK-3 Bilingual Certification → Must be employed in a PK-3 classroom servicing bilingual students.
  - PK-3 SPED Certification → Must be employed in a PK-3 classroom servicing SPED students.
  - EC-6 Core Certification → Must be employed in an EC-6 classroom (any subject).
  - EC-6 Bilingual Certification → Must be employed in an EC-6 classroom servicing bilingual students.
  - EC-6 SPED Certification → Must be employed in an EC-6 classroom servicing SPED students.
- You must be employed as an *instructional* paraprofessional.

- o If it is not an instructional position, it does not qualify for the Para Path program.
- o If it is a sub position, (long-term or otherwise), it does not qualify for the Para Path program.

## Para Path Advising

- You must be advised by Tyler Smith (Program Academic Advisor).
  - o Email trs069@shsu.edu
  - o Phone (936) 294-4452
- There will be some courses that you will register for with "typical" undergraduate students and some courses that will be blocked for Para Path students only. Most courses in the program will have field work associated with them.
- You must apply for the Educator Preparation Program prior to registering for Field 1 courses.
  - More information will be given in EDUC 1101.
  - o Application fee \$100
  - o TEA fee \$35

## **Timeline of the Program**

- The program is approximately 4 semesters of full-time coursework which does not include core courses that must still be completed or retaken for a higher grade.
- All field experience hours (for all courses) are to be logged in the Ed Aide (Para Path) Time Log in TK20 (the database SHSU uses to track certification requirements).
  - You will learn more about this in EDUC 1101. Please see below under "TK20- Time Logs" for more detailed information.
- Before you can log your field experience hours in TK20, you MUST be fully admitted to the Educator
  Preparation Program. To be fully admitted, you must accept your admission by clicking on the link in the
  admission email.
- Upon successful completion of 540 hours and SHSU supervised observations, your student teaching semesters will be waived.
  - Your hours must be logged by you and approved by your cooperating teacher.
  - You must log hours across all three field semesters:
    - 50 observation hours in Field 1
    - 245 clinical hours in Field 2
    - 245 clinical hours in Field 3

## Pre-requisite semester(s):

- Enroll in pre-requisite education courses including EDUC 1101.
- Complete TEA-mandated Mental Health training.
- Complete TEA-mandated Substance Abuse training.
- Complete TEA-mandated Suicide Prevention training.
- Complete content exam practice test.

- Students do not need to have an assigned cooperating/ mentor teacher at this time for program requirements.
- Maintain a 2.75 GPA.

#### Field 1:

- Enroll in Field 1 coursework.
- Complete practice STR (recommended).
- Log 50 **observation** hours in the Ed Aide Pre-Clinical Time Log in TK20.
  - All hours logged will be a part of the student's employment hours as a paraprofessional, not separate from their employment.
  - Students will need a district-assigned cooperating/ mentor teacher to approve observation hours; the mentor does not have any TK20 documents to complete this semester.
- Maintain a 2.75 GPA.

#### Field 2:

- Enroll in Field 2 coursework.
- Complete TEA-mandated Dyslexia training.
- Log 245 clinical hours in the Ed Aide Clinical Time Log in TK20.
  - All hours logged will be a part of the student's employment hours as a paraprofessional, not separate from their employment.
- Complete all Field 2 TK20 documents and forms.
- Students will keep the same cooperating/ mentor teacher unless there is a reason the CT cannot continue.
  - If a new cooperating teacher is needed, this should be communicated to the Para Path program
    as soon as possible (via email at <a href="ParaPath@shsu.edu">ParaPath@shsu.edu</a>) so the district can be contacted about
    assigning a new CT.
  - The cooperating teacher will be assigned a TK20 login (email will be sent from SHSU with login info) and will complete the required forms in TK20 for Field 2.
- The cooperating teacher will approve all logged hours.
- Students will have 2 formal T-TESS observations during this semester as well as 3 informal walk-throughs (performed by SHSU field supervisors).
- TAKE AND PASS content exam (NOT practice exam) by the end of Field 2 to be eligible to continue to Field 3.
- File an appeal for consideration of a deadline extension if you have not yet passed your content exam.
- Maintain a 2.75 GPA.

#### Field 3:

Enroll in Field 3 coursework.

- Complete TEA-mandated Ethics training.
- Log 245 clinical hours in the Ed Aide Clinical Time Log in TK20.
  - All hours logged will be a part of the student's employment hours as a paraprofessional, not separate from their employment.
- Complete all Field 3 TK20 documents and forms.
- Students will keep the same cooperating/ mentor teacher unless there is a reason the CT cannot continue.
  - The cooperating teacher will use their same TK20 login and will complete required forms in TK20 for Field 3.
  - If a new cooperating teacher is needed, this should be communicated to the Para Path program
    as soon as possible (via email at <a href="ParaPath@shsu.edu">ParaPath@shsu.edu</a>) so the district can be contacted about
    assigning a new CT.
  - The new cooperating teacher will be assigned a TK20 login (email will be sent from SHSU with login info).
- Students will have 2 formal T-TESS observations during this semester as well as 3 informal walk-throughs (performed by SHSU field supervisors).
- Complete TCAR, due approximately four-five weeks before the end of the semester. (See below for more detailed information.)
- It is highly recommended that students pass their STR, PPR, and any other certification-related exams by the end of this semester.
- Maintain a 2.75 GPA.
- Apply for graduation.
- Apply for certification (after graduation).

## **Important Components of the Program**

## **Cooperating/ Mentor Teachers**

- Cooperating teachers are assigned by district HR in conjunction with campus administrators.
- Districts are notified by the SHSU Field Experience Coordinator or the Para Path Coordinator regarding students needing a cooperating teacher and the students' specific content areas.
- All cooperating teachers must meet these requirements:
  - ♦ Three years' teaching experience
  - ♦ Certified in the same content area as the student to be mentored
  - ♦ Teaching in that content area for at least 50% of the instructional day
- Districts/ admin will communicate with SHSU a student's assigned cooperating teacher, the CT's district email address and the CT's TEA test ID #.

#### **TK20**

- TK20© is an online support system for colleges of teacher education, created for the collection and evaluation of performance data for teacher candidates and for overall management of academic activities at the college.
- The clinical teaching evaluation forms found in this guide will be completed online. Teacher candidates
  and field supervisors can log into TK20 at <a href="https://tk20.shsu.edu">https://tk20.shsu.edu</a> with their SamWeb username and
  password.
- Classroom cooperating/ mentor teachers will be given login information via email and granted access to complete their evaluation of their teacher candidate.
- Specific instructions for accessing and submitting the online assessments will be emailed from TK20 support and/ or from the Para Path program.
- Please contact SHSU TK20 support (TK20@shsu.edu) if you have any difficulty logging in or completing an assessment.

## **Time Logs**

- Time logs are the method by which teacher candidates officially document their field hours.
- Students will log into their TK20 account and access the Time Log link to the left to create a time log entry.
- Mentor teachers **do not** log into TK20 to approve time logs; instead they are emailed an approval link from TK20 after teacher candidates submit their time logs for approval.
- Students in **Field 1** (pre-clinical experience) have the following requirements:
  - Log hours in the Ed Aide Pre-Clinical Experience Timelog.
  - o A minimum of **50 hours** is required for this semester.
  - Hours logged will be categorized as "observation" hours.
- Students in **Field 2** (clinical experience) have the following requirements:
  - Log hours in the Ed Aide Clinical Experience Timelog.
  - o A minimum of **245 hours** is required for this semester.
  - Hours logged will be categorized as "interaction with students."
- Students in Field 3 (clinical experience) have the following requirements:
  - Log hours in the Ed Aide Clinical Experience Timelog.
  - o A minimum of **245 hours** is required for this semester.
  - Hours logged will be categorized as "interaction with students."
- Upon successful completion of 540 hours and SHSU supervised observations, your student teaching semesters will be waived.
  - Your hours must be logged and approved by your cooperating teacher.
  - You must log hours across all three field semesters:
    - 50 observation hours in Field 1
    - 245 clinical hours in Field 2
    - 245 clinical hours in Field 3

## **Field Experience**

Students will complete hours in the field (school district classroom) for BOTH their coursework and for certification requirements.

#### **Field Experience Binders**

- All teacher candidates are required to upload documentation in TK20, including agreements, forms, and observations.
- Collectively this is known as the "Field Binder."
- Note that time logs are also in TK20, but they are not a part of the Field Experience binder.

## **Field Experience Binders Content and Completion Guide**

- Field 2 (Field 2 Para Path semester = Clinical Semester 1)
  - o Completed by the Student:
    - "Beginning of Clinical Experience Forms" tab
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Guidelines for Clinical Teaching
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate FERPA Consent to Release
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Standards of Professional Conduct
      - ♦ Para Path students do not have to complete the field experience badge policy.
    - "Pre-Conference, Lesson Plans, and Post-Conference" tab
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Pre-Conference Lesson Plan and Questions: Observation 1
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Pre-Conference Lesson Plan and Questions: Observation 2
      - ♦ T-TESS Self Reflection 1
      - ♦ T-TESS Self Reflection 2
    - "End of Semester and End of Clinical Experience Forms" tab
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Forms and Assessments Verification 1
    - "Dispositions" tab
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Dispositions Candidate Self-Assessment 1

#### Completed by the Field Supervisor:

- T-TESS Observations 1 and 2
- Walkthrough Observations 1, 2, 3
- Educator Candidate Dispositions Assessment Long Form: Semester 1
- Field Supervisor Verification: Semester 1
- Teacher Preparation Growth Plan: Semester 1 (as needed)
- Field Supervisor Contact Log

#### Completed by the Classroom Cooperating (Mentor) Teacher(s):

- Cooperating/ Mentor Teacher Agreement
- Teacher Candidate Guidelines Agreement and Electronic Signature
- Cooperating/ Mentor Teacher Progress Reports 1 and 2

- Cooperating/ Mentor Teacher Verification 1
- Field 3 (Field 3 Para Path semester = Clinical Semester 2)
  - Completed by the Student:
    - "Pre-Conference, Lesson Plans, and Post-Conference" tab
      - Teacher Candidate Pre-Conference Lesson Plan and Questions: Observation 3
      - Teacher Candidate Pre-Conference Lesson Plan and Questions: Observation 4
      - ♦ T-TESS Self Reflection 3
      - ♦ T-TESS Self Reflection 4
    - "End of Semester and End of Clinical Experience Forms" tab
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Forms and Assessments Verification 2
    - "Dispositions" tab
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Dispositions Candidate Self-Assessment 2
    - "Required Surveys" tab
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Survey of Services and Operations
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Survey of Field Supervisor
      - ♦ Teacher Candidate Survey of Cooperating/ Mentor Teacher
  - Completed by the Field Supervisor:
    - T-TESS Observations 3 and 4
    - Walkthrough Observations 4, 5, 6
    - Educator Candidate Dispositions Assessment Long Form: Semester 2
    - Field Supervisor Verification: Semester 2
    - Teacher Preparation Growth Plan: Semester 2 (as needed)
    - Field Supervisor Contact Log
    - Survey of Cooperating/Mentor Teacher
    - Field Supervisor Final Recommendation Form
  - Completed by the Classroom Cooperating (Mentor) Teacher(s)
    - Cooperating/ Mentor Teacher Progress Reports 3 and 4
    - Cooperating/ Mentor Teacher Verification 2
    - Final Teacher Candidate Evaluation

Note: For the Para Path program specifically, there are no TK20 documentation requirements for campus administrators.

#### **POP Cycle**

"POP Cycle" refers to the cycle of Pre-conference, Observation, and Post-conference interactions between field supervisors and teacher candidates. This cycle will be completed as a part of each formal T-TESS observation, a minimum of 2x per field semester (4 total).

#### **TCAR Performance Assessment**

- TCAR (Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness) is a portfolio that serves as a summative assessment of your field experience and is required for both graduation and certification.
- It is due near the end of the Field 3 semester, typically 4-5 weeks before the end of classes.
- You must complete TCAR during your Field 3 semester, even if you are not planning to graduate the same semester as your Field 3 coursework.
- PLEASE NOTE: You do not need to wait until Field 3 to start collecting artifacts for TCAR!

#### **TEXES Exams**

## **Required Certification Exams Based on Degree Plan**

#### PK-3 Core

- o 292 Early Childhood 3 TEXES
- 293 Science of Teaching Reading TEXES
- 154 English as a Second Language (ESL) Supplemental TExES
- 160 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TEXES

## PK-3 Bilingual

- 292 Early Childhood 3 TEXES
- 293 Science of Teaching Reading TEXES
- o 190 Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) SPANISH TEXES
- o 164 Bilingual Education Supplemental TEXES
- o 160 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TEXES

#### PK-3 SPED

- o 292 Early Childhood 3 TExES
- 293 Science of Teaching Reading TEXES
- o 161 Special Education (EC-12) TEXES
- o 154 English as a Second Language (ESL) Supplemental TEXES
- 160 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TEXES

#### EC-6 Core

- o 391 Core Subjects (EC-6) TEXES
- 293 Science of Teaching Reading TEXES
- 154 English as a Second Language (ESL) Supplemental TEXES
- 160 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TEXES

## • EC-6 Bilingual

- o 391 Core Subjects (EC-6) TEXES
- 293 Science of Teaching Reading TEXES
- 190 Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) SPANISH TEXES
- o 164 Bilingual Education Supplemental TEXES
- o 160 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TEXES

#### EC-6 SPED

- o 391 Core Subjects (EC-6) TEXES
- o 293 Science of Teaching Reading TEXES
- o 161 Special Education (EC-12) TEXES
- o 154 English as a Second Language (ESL) Supplemental TEXES
- o 160 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TEXES

(Please contact advising and/ or testing staff for information about exams for other certification areas.)

#### **Content Practice Tests and Exam:**

- Para Path students must pass the TEXES exam (NOT practice exam) for their content area prior to placement in Field 3. (The deadline for passing the exam is near the end of the Field 2 semester.)
- Once a teacher candidate scores 80% on their practice test, they will be allowed to take the actual TEXES exam. Students are responsible for sending the passing practice score report to Mrs. Jean Hubbartt at edu\_edprep@shsu.edu to receive approval to register for the TEXES exam.
- Students who do not have a passing score on their content exam by the end of Field 2 MUST file an appeal to be eligible for consideration to move on to Field 3. The outcome of the appeals process is not guaranteed.

## Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Exam:

- Para Path students are highly encouraged to pass the PPR by the end of the Field 3 semester.
- Once a teacher candidate scores 80% on their practice test, they will be allowed to take the actual TEXES exam. Students are responsible for sending the passing practice score report to Mrs. Jean Hubbartt at edu\_edprep@shsu.edu to receive approval to register for the TEXES exam.

## **ESL, Special Education, and Bilingual Education Exams:**

- Instructors will provide a list of approvals for these exams to Mrs. Hubbartt after practice tests are completed during class.
- Although highly encouraged, students are not required to pass ESL, SPED, or Bilingual exams prior to Field 3.

# **Program Requirements Quick Reference**

Semester	Student Requirements	TEA Trainings and Testing	Assigned mentor needed?	Mentor Requirements	School Admin Requirements
Prerequisite semester(s)	<ul> <li>Coursework per SHSU advising including EDUC 1101</li> <li>No logging of hours</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Mental Health training</li> <li>Substance Abuse training</li> <li>Suicide Prevention training</li> <li>Content exam practice test</li> </ul>	No	NA	General support of Para Path student
Field 1	<ul> <li>Field 1 coursework</li> <li>Log 50 observation hours and submit to mentor for approval</li> </ul>	STR practice test	Yes	<ul> <li>Approve student's logged hours via approval link in TK20 emails</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Work with HR and student to assign a mentor</li> <li>Assist student in getting classroom experience for all program requirements</li> <li>General support of student</li> </ul>
Field 2	<ul> <li>Field 2 coursework</li> <li>Log 245 clinical hours and submit to mentor for approval</li> <li>Complete required TK20 documents</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Dyslexia training</li> <li>Pass content exam</li> <li>FILE APPEAL if content exam is not passed</li> </ul>	Yes	<ul> <li>Approve student's logged hours</li> <li>Complete mentor teacher forms in TK20 for Field 2</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Work with HR and student to assign a new mentor (if needed)</li> <li>Communicate mentor changes to SHSU</li> <li>Assist student in getting classroom experience for all program requirements</li> <li>General support of student</li> </ul>
Field 3	<ul> <li>Field 3 coursework</li> <li>Log 245 clinical hours and submit to mentor for approval</li> <li>Complete TCAR</li> <li>Complete required TK20 documents</li> <li>APPLY FOR GRADUATION</li> <li>APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Ethics training</li> <li>Pass remaining certification exams</li> </ul>	Yes	<ul> <li>Approve student's logged hours</li> <li>Complete mentor teacher forms in TK20 for Field 3</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Work with HR and student to assign a new mentor (if needed)</li> <li>Communicate mentor changes to SHSU</li> <li>Assist student in getting classroom experience for all program requirements</li> <li>General support of student</li> </ul>

## **Financial Assistance Opportunities**

#### **TEACH Grant**

Through the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, Congress created the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program that provides grants to students that are seeking degrees in high-need fields and intend to teach in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves students from low-income families. This grant is available to undergraduate juniors and seniors and to students seeking a master's degree.

#### What do I need?

- Verified FSA ID
- o TEACH Grant Eligible School Name: Sam Houston State University 003606
- Personal Information:
  - Permanent and Mailing Address (if different than permanent address)
  - Telephone Number
  - E-mail Address
- Reference information for two people with different U.S. addresses who have known you for at least 3 years:
  - Name (First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name)
  - Permanent address (Street, City, State, Zip Code)
  - E-mail Address (optional)
  - Telephone Number
  - Relationship to You (The first reference should be a parent or legal guardian).

To receive a TEACH Grant, you must sign a **TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve or Repay** in which you agree to —

- Serve as a full-time, highly-qualified teacher for four elementary or secondary school years at a school or educational service agency that serves low-income students. To access the directory, please go to: <a href="https://studentaid.gov/tcli/">https://studentaid.gov/tcli/</a>;
- o Teach in a high-need field; and
- Complete the required four years of teaching within eight years after you graduate from or otherwise cease to be enrolled at the institution of higher education where you received your TEACH grants.

#### **Educational Aide Exemption/Waiver**

Academic Year 2025-2026 application will be available here once the application opens: <a href="https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/blank-forms-templates/educational-aide-exemption-fy-2026-application/">https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/blank-forms-templates/educational-aide-exemption-fy-2026-application/</a>

\*Please contact the Office of Financial Aid if you have any questions about accessing or completing this application.

## Eligibility Requirements

Be a resident of Texas.

- o Be registered for the Selective Service or be exempt from this requirement.
- Be employed in some capacity by a public school district in Texas during the full term for which the student receives the award unless granted a hardship.
- Show financial need.
- Meet satisfactory academic progress requirements established by the college or university.
- Be enrolled in courses required for teacher certification in one or more areas that the Texas Education Agency has determined to be experiencing a critical shortage of teachers at public schools in Texas in accordance with Texas Administrative Code, 21.1083 (6).
- Have been employed by a public school district in Texas working full-time, in a classroom directly with the students, in a teaching capacity as:
  - An Educational Aide for at least one school year of the past five school years preceding the term or semester for which the student is awarded their initial exemption, -OR-
  - A substitute teacher for 180 days of the past five school years preceding the term or semester for which the student is awarded their initial exemption.

## **EdAide Exemption vs. Waiver**

#### Exemption

- Awarded by the Office of Financial Aid.
- Includes exemption from tuition and fees for the semester of the award.
- Is only available for students in a high-needs area; currently bilingual and SPED certifications qualify.
- Exempts student from student teaching, observations, and the logging of 540 classroom hours for the remainder of their program.
- College of Education policy requires students with the exemption to still have at least one observation.

#### Waiver

- Handled by the Para Path coordinator(s) in the SHSU College of Education.
- No financial award associated with the waiver.
- All Para Path students are eligible to earn the waiver.
- Exempts students from student teaching. Four observations and the logging of 520 classroom hours is still required.

<u>Teach for Houston</u> – A non-profit partner that will reimburse application fees

SHSU Transfer Scholarship – Amount varies based on transfer GPA.

<u>Scholarships4Kats</u> – General SHSU scholarship application; accepted students are encouraged to apply every year; priority deadline is November 1.

**Loan forgiveness** – TEA program

**General financial aid and student loans** 

## **Important Contact Information**

**Program Coordinator and** Suzanne Kitts

East Texas Cohort Coordinator: ParaPath@shsu.edu

(936) 294-4126

Program Advisor: Tyler Smith

<u>trs069@shsu.edu</u> (936) 294-4452

Certification Officer: Jean Hubbartt

(Testing) jmh062@shsu.edu

(936) 294-1045

TK20 Support: Vivian Blackwell

TK20@shsu.edu